

WASHINGTON (May 17) – Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-6) discussed efforts to improve storm preparedness during remarks at a “Tornado Playbook” briefing held by the American Red Cross today at the U.S. Capitol.

Bachus and Congresswoman Terri Sewell (AL-7) were invited by the Red Cross to share their personal reflections on the deadly tornadoes that struck the State of Alabama on April 27, 2011 and to discuss lessons learned from the recovery and relief efforts.

Congressman Bachus said after the briefing, “Our experiences in Alabama reinforced the fact that early warnings, whether from the media or weather radios in the home, save lives. Citizens heeded these warnings and sought safe shelter. It is important to have a safe shelter nearby, and in my view FEMA should prioritize community and school shelters in high-risk and low-income populations as opposed to shelters in private homes. We also need to work on ways to better enable law enforcement and emergency personnel from other areas to assist fellow communities when they are dealing with overwhelming demands in the wake of a severe tornado.”

Bachus repeated his appreciation for the relief assistance that the American Red Cross, local churches, and nonprofits provided to citizens.

“A lasting memory from the tornadoes for me will always be how the public and private sectors and our churches and citizens all joined in the effort to provide comfort to the victims of the tornadoes,” Bachus said.

Congressman Bachus is the author of a 2003 law that encouraged the construction of storm shelters in manufactured housing communities and has fought to ensure the timely launch of a new weather satellite (the Joint Polar Satellite System) that would provide earlier and more accurate storm warnings.

Speakers during the briefing also included the Reverend Randy Vaughn, Director of the Office of Disaster Management of the National Baptist Convention. Rev. Vaughn helped organize charitable relief efforts in the aftermath of the tornadoes in Alabama.

*To view excerpts of Congressman Bachus' remarks, [click here](#) .*